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SHORT COMMUNICATION

Some sawfly host plants not listed by Benson.—Robert Benson wrote the Royal Entomological Society of London's key to the Symphyta in the "Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects" series. It was published as Volume VI part 2 in three parts, section a (1951), section b (1952) and section c (1958). Section a has been reprinted with minor revisions by J. Quinlan and I. D. Gauld in 1981. Benson's key listed the larval host plants that were known to him; the following additional records are based on sawfly larvae collected and reared by the author, except where otherwise stated.

Athalia cornubiae Benson. Benson lists this as larva unknown in section b but adds the host plant as *Sedum album* L. in a supplement to section c. This plant is thought to be native in only a few places in the Malvern Hills and Somerset but is found widely elsewhere on old walls and buildings. There are very few records of the sawfly. On 9.x.91 a specimen of a garden hybrid *Sedum* 'coral carpet' was received at the R.H.S. Garden from a private garden in Pinner, Middx. The plant was being severely defoliated by large numbers of greenish-grey larvae. These went down into the soil in the rearing jar a few days later but no adults emerged in the following year. They were of the *Athalia* type and there is little doubt that they were *cornubiae*.

Calioa cerasi (L.) has black, slimy slug-like larvae that are commonly known as pear and cherry slugworms. They can be found grazing away the upper leaf surface of many woody plants in the Rosaceae family. Benson lists *Pyrus* and *Prunus* species

as the main hosts, plus *Amygdalus*, *Cydonia*, *Crataegus*, *Mespilus*, *Rosa*, *Rubus* and *Sorbus* species, with two non-Rosaceae genera, *Quercus* and *Salix*. To these can be added the following records of larvae feeding on plants, all of which are in the Rosaceae family: *Amelanchier lamarckii* at the R.H.S. Garden, Wisley, Surrey, on 15.ix.93; *Pyracantha* 'Mohave' planted outside the Pelham-Clinton building at Dinton Pastures Country Park, Hurst, Berks., on 18.ix.93; *Cotoneaster horizontalis* in a private garden at Royston, Herts., on 26.x.75.

Tenthredo zona Klug. Benson describes this as sparingly common south-east of the Wash/Severn line, mainly on dry heaths and chalk downs, but gives no host plant. On 2.vi.90 two larvae were found feeding on the foliage of perforate St John's wort, *Hypericum perforatum* L., growing in chalk grassland at White Downs, near Westcott, Surrey. They went down into the soil on 4–5.vi.90 and a male adult emerged on 24.iv.91.

Pachyprotasis antennata (Klug). Benson gives *Filipendula* and *Fraxinus* as host plants. Females were reared on 3.vi.85 and 18.vi.85 from two larvae found on alder, *Alnus glutinosa* L., growing on Wisley Common, Surrey, on 11.x.84. The larvae were eating irregular-shaped holes in the margins and centres of the leaves.

Pachyprotasis rapae (L.). This is one of Britain's most common sawflies and Benson records it feeding on *Betonica*, *Scrophularia*, *Solidago*, *Fraxinus* and, added in the section c supplement, *Antirrhinum*. On 22.vi.83 larvae were found on plants of *Stachys officinalis* 'rosea' growing at the R.H.S. Garden, Wisley, Surrey. Nearby plants of *Stachys macrantha* were unaffected. The larvae make irregular holes in the foliage, mainly in the centre of the leaf rather than at the margins. A female emerged on 15.v.84.

Pachyprotasis variegata (Fallen). Benson gives the potato, *Solanum tuberosum* L., as a host plant and also notes that it has been found feeding on the Continent on *Digitalis lutea* L. Larvae were found feeding on the foliage and flowers of rough hawkbit, *Leontodon hispidus* L., growing at The Sheepleas, near West Horsley, Surrey on 4.vii.81. A female emerged 29.iv.82. Larvae were also found at the same site on 3.viii.85 feeding on the flowers of ox-eye daisy, *Leucanthemum vulgare* Lam. A female emerged 29.v.86. Like many other members of the subfamily Tenthredininae the adults of *P. variegata* are predators of other small insects. One female readily ate the small fly and a larva of the hawthorn webber moth, *Scythropia crataegella* (L.), that it was offered.

Macrophya albicincta (Schrank). Benson included this species in his key but it was later realized by Chevin, H. (*Annls Soc. Ent. Fr.(N.S.)* 1975; 11: 253–260) that this was in fact two species, *albicincta* (Schrank) and *alboannulata* Costa. Benson gives the host plants for his *albicincta* as *Sambucus nigra* L. and sometimes *Valeriana officinalis* L. The food plants given for the split species are *Sambucus* species for *M. alboannulata* and *Sambucus* species and *Valeriana officinalis* for *M. albicincta*. On 21.vii.84 solitary larvae were found making rounded holes in the leaves of guelder rose, *Viburnum opulus* L., in Baynes Wood, near Greenham Common, Berks. Several males and females of *Macrophya albicincta* (Schrank) were reared between 24 and 30.iv.85.

Priophorus pallipes (Lep.). This common species is recorded by Benson as feeding on various Rosaceae plants such as *Crataegus*, *Fragaria*, *Prunus*, *Pyrus* and *Sorbus*, and also on *Betula*. On 11.ix.92 plants of red chokeberry, *Aronia arbutifolia*, on sale at a garden centre at Mayford, near Woking, Surrey, were having their foliage extensively holed by this sawfly. This North American plant is in the Rosaceae family. A female emerged on 1.x.92; normally larvae found late in the year will overwinter as prepupal larvae and adults emerge during May–June.—A. J. Halstead, R.H.S. Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB.